

Annual Report  
2021-2022

# سالانہ رپورٹ



LAHORE  
BIENNALE  
FOUNDATION

## Executive Director's Message:



The Lahore Biennale Foundation has an inclusive approach to achieving its projects and goals, which challenges traditional critique methods and prevalent frameworks for curating, researching, and archiving material culture, built ecologies, and histories. The organisation is dedicated to being

public-centered. To achieve this, it integrates itself into the public and creates sustained dialogues with various layers of publicness. This approach helps in the creation of public-centered programming.

In response to the evolving realities post-COVID, our collaboration with the British Council gave rise to the LBF Virtual Museum, providing a dynamic online space for artists to explore the cultural heritage and engage with the contemporary cultural landscape, amplifying local voices in the digital realm.

Similarly, the "Zinda-dil-a'an-e-Lahore" Billboard Project stood out as a vibrant celebration of Lahore's cultural richness amid the challenges of the pandemic, aimed to broaden the audience for contemporary art, fostering dialogue and connection within our community.

Aligning with the pressing need for climate justice and environmental sustainability, Recognising the stark reality that our city had lost 75% of its tree cover over the last two decades, the ALG embarked on an ambitious mission to plant 2.5 million trees. Beyond its environmental impact, the ALG endeavours to create a platform that encourages a multidisciplinary approach, involving art and philanthropy in the pursuit of a sustainable future, which led us to our latest project, the Green School Certification Program.

The GSCP reached a significant milestone with the successful conclusion of its pilot phase. This year-long initiative was designed to infuse critical thinking and ecological practices into the academic curriculum. The project revealed the importance of working with public schools, their teachers, and students, given their limited resources. The government extended support to develop a scalable module initially aimed at expanding it city-wide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Qudsia Rahim'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'Q' and 'R'.

Qudsia Rahim  
Executive Director, Lahore Biennale Foundation



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## Introduction

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) is a non-profit organisation that seeks to provide critical sites for experimentation in the visual arts. LBF focuses on the many stages of production, display and reception of contemporary art in diverse forms. It understands inclusivity, collaboration, and public engagement as being central to its vision and is committed to developing the potential of art as an agent of social transformation.

Thus, the LBF focuses on the many stages of production, experience and appreciation of art in all its forms. The Foundation is committed to the potential of art as an instrument of important social critique. The LBF operates in awareness of possible public(s) and location(s) but is global in aspiration: It values public investment and considers the specificity of geographical and social context in establishing the legitimacy of its functions but does not pander to preconceived tropes of the 'vernacular'.

To this end, LBF endeavours to approach its projects and goals through alternate strategies informed by inclusivity and context-driven knowledge. This approach counters traditional forms of critique and prevailing frameworks for curating, experimenting, researching and archiving material culture, built ecologies, and histories.

LBF is supported by government bodies and has developed enduring relations with international partners. These

partnerships at home and abroad attempt to bridge institutional gaps between Lahore and the rest of the world. The third edition of its flagship event, the Lahore Biennale, will be held in Fall 2024.



## **Board of Directors**

Osman Khalid Waheed (*Chairman*)

Qudsia Rahim (*Executive Director*)

Rafay Alam (*Secretary*)

Fawzia Naqvi

Tariq Zaman

Raza Ali Dada

Mohsin Hamid

Naazish Ata Ullah (Member since JAN 2022)

Naima Dadabhoy (Member since April 2022)

## Zinda-dil-a'an-e-Lahore – Billboard Project

Public Project

November 2020 - December 2020

The Lahore Biennale Foundation in partnership with Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), initiated a billboard project in which 16 participating artists from the City or having strong connections to Lahore displayed artworks from 24 November 2020 to 4 December 2020. The project was curated by Qudsia Rahim, Executive Director of the Lahore Biennale Foundation. Out of these 7 artworks were new commissions.

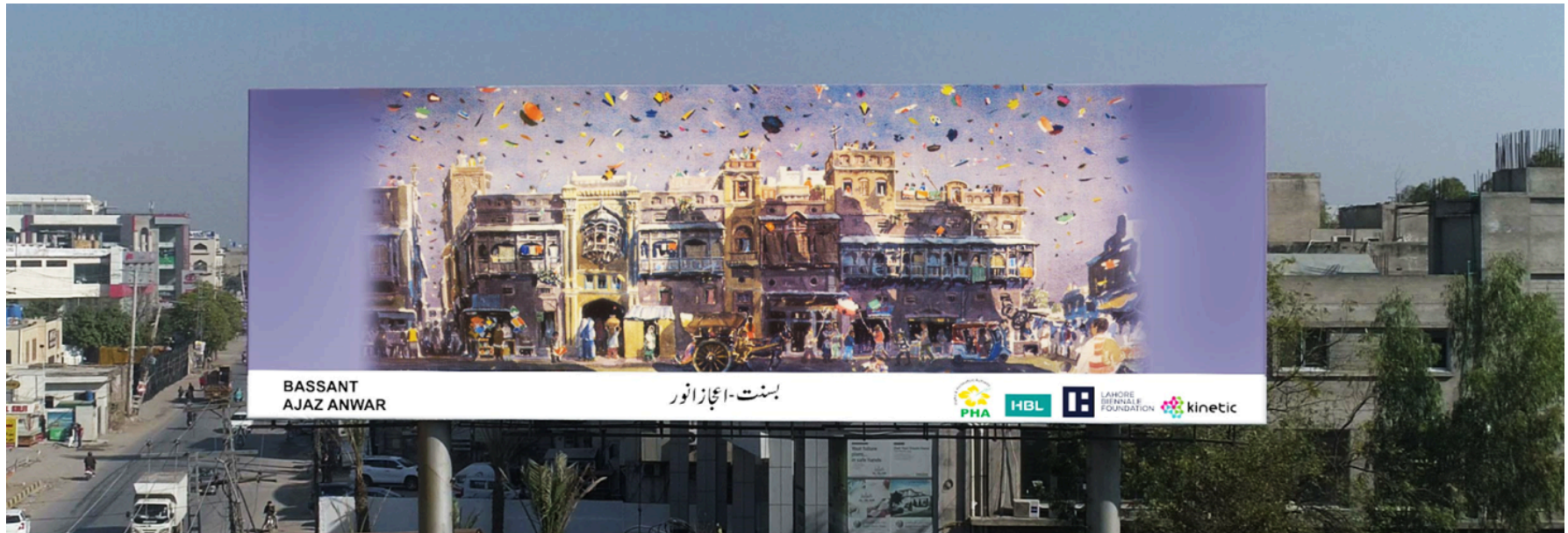
Lahore is one of Pakistan's cultural capitals and home to the arts and literature. As a response to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, the Lahore Biennale Foundation invited artists to take over billboards in various parts of the City as an artists' response and to pay homage to the City and its Citizens – a reminder of the humanity that holds us together.

Zinda-dil-a'an-e-Lahore is a unique partnership between an arts organisation, local government and the corporate sector to introduce a wider audience to contemporary art(s): a dialogue largely missing in our environment. We believe that the arts play a great role in people's health, wellbeing and happiness. Artists whose practices have strong social relevance were invited to participate in this project. LBF invited viewers from across the city to engage with these works and create their own meanings through their observations.





With a focus on the city and its residents, the project is a response to the prevailing COVID-19 situation. The locations for the project include both areas with a rich history like Bhatti Gate and Garhi Shahu and relatively contemporary urban spaces like Gulberg, DHA, Jail Road, Kot Lakh Pat, Faisal Town, Wapda Town, Karim Block Allama Iqbal Town and Johar Town.



### Artists, Work Titles and Locations:

- *Salima Hashmi – A Poem for Zainab* at Jail Road opposite Service Hospital.
- *Ali Kazim – Conference of The Birds* at Mini Market.
- *Faiza Butt – Jester* at Khayaban e Jinnah.
- *Ayesha Jatoi – Khat-E-Ufaq Bhi Ab Yahan Baqi Nahi* at Kareem Market Roundabout.
- *Waqas Khan – Breath of Compassionate* at Main Boulevard Gulberg, City Mall.
- *Shah Abdullah Alamee – Rahbar Say Apni Rah Juda Kr Chukay Hain Hum* at Allama Iqbal Road, Garhi Shahu.
- *Hamra Abbas – Rang* at Faisal Town.
- *Wardha Shabbir – Oran-Chard* at Bhatti Gate.
- *Ruby Chisti – An Essence of Time* at Bhatti Gate.
- *Naazish Ata Ullah – Pause* at Maulana Shaukat Ali Road (Near Iqra Medical Complex).
- *Atif Khan – Bridge on The Canal* at Shaukat Khanum Flyover.
- *Saba Khan – How Young is Your Tap Water* at 2-D, Karim Block Market, Jinnah Hospital.
- *Asif Khan – Film Still: 48* at G-1 Market, Johar Town.
- *Masooma Syed – Outsider* at Canal Road (Near Gourmet Bakers, Canal Bank Rd, Muhafiz Town, Thokar Niaz Baig, Pasco Society).
- *Ajaz Anwar – Bassant* at Canal Road (Near Gourmet Bakers, Canal Bank Rd, Muhafiz Town, Thokar Niaz Baig, Pasco Society).

- *Imran Qureshi – Still/Breathing* above Heaven Hotel at Main Boulevard DHA (Ghazi Chowk, Defence Road).





## Afforestation Lahore Group

Since May 2019

The Afforestation Lahore Group (ALG) is a landmark initiative of the Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) with the Commissioner Office Lahore in collaboration have brought the government and the civil society together for better health of the city and its people. Understanding that Lahore has lost 75% of its tree cover over the last 20 years, as a result of which it is now ranked the second worst city in the world (during smog season) in terms of Air Quality Index by Air Visual), it is imperative to initiate a re-plantation drive to counter carbon emission along with the other necessary steps taken by the government. The ALG is designed to encourage a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach amongst the fields of art and philanthropy in Pakistan which focuses on supporting research and development – by building relationships with private, government, institutional, and corporate partners, both at domestic and international levels. Climate change presents a tangible threat, and given its severity, it is imperative to have all stakeholders united on one single platform. With this initiative, nature has been given a chance, and wilderness has successfully taken over. A total of 2.5 million trees have been planted in the city of Lahore, thanks to the active participation of all stakeholders in society.

More information about ALG [here](#).





## Greening the Landscape: A Pictorial Evolution of ALC's Impact

*Liberty Market (2019 - 2020)*





*Saggian Interchange*

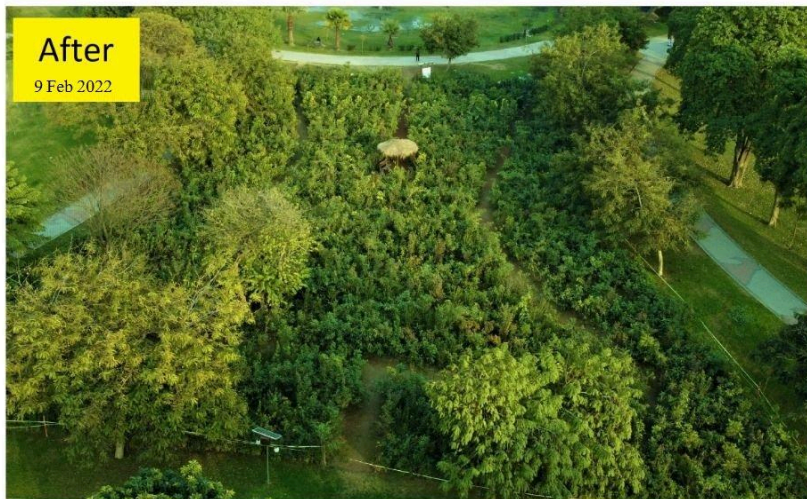


*Shadman Park*

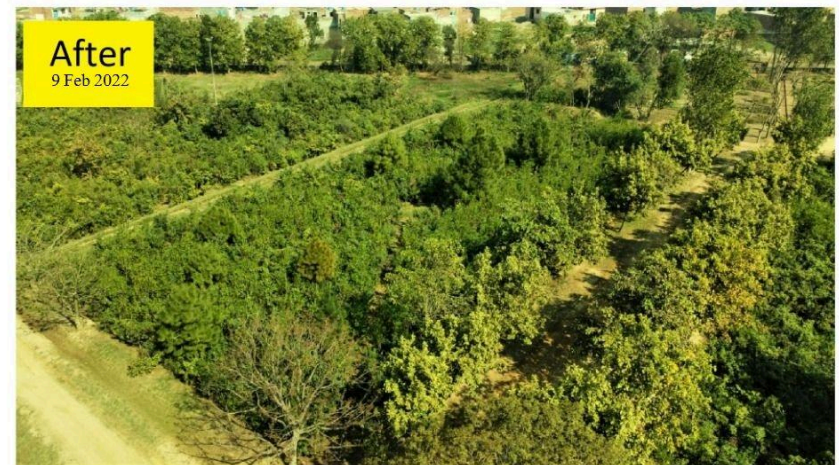




*Botanical Park Jhallo*



*Jilani Park*





# Green School Certification Program

GIVE NATURE A CHANCE

**The Green School Certification Program: Scalable Pilot Project:** July 2022 - Feb 2023

*“Once known as the City of Gardens, Lahore has lost over 70% of its tree cover and is now ranked as the most polluted city. This was exacerbated by the floods last year, the environmental crisis is adversely impacting the livelihood and health of its residents. The project functions parallel to the academic curriculum, empowering the next generation of eco-citizens through advocacy of long-term sustainable practices at a community level. It supports a circular system of government bodies, educational institutions, and private and social sector entities that come together to affect the intergenerational transfer of climate-aware knowledge and practice. Phase-wise findings inform a resource document, a checklist of green practices for schools and pro-environment policy recommendations that are developed with the partnership of the government to impact future climate and education policies. The project structure facilitates an expansion model which can be replicated across institutions and scaled up to other regions in Pakistan. Creating a*

*network of eco-conscious entities that are committed to reducing their environmental impact and contributing to a more sustainable future, especially in the context of the Global South.” - Qudsia Rahim, Project Director*



## Project Description

The Green School Certification Program (GSCP) is a year-long initiative that seeks critical thinking and whole systems learnings on climate education and ecological practices using art-education as a pedagogical tool, with a focus on climate justice. We aim to establish 'baseline – Green Schools' by developing a comprehensive pedagogical model

and promoting climate knowledge and ecological practices through a whole systems approach.

We express our deep gratitude to our esteemed project advisors, including Raza Ali Dada, Rafay Alam, Naazish Ata Ullah, Dr. Faisal Bari, Chief Patron Abdullah Khan Sumbal, Umer Rasool, and Captain Usman. Their invaluable guidance has been instrumental in steering us through this project, and we sincerely appreciate their unwavering support.

More on the Green School Certification Program [here](#).





## LBF Virtual Museum

September 2020

*The Lahore Biennale Foundation Virtual Museum (LBF VM)* is a digital platform for artists, academics and creative practitioners to come together at the crossroads of ideas and research based on our shared cultural language and artistic legacy. Knowledge creation and dissemination is the natural outcome of this collaborative experiment with the project inviting a diverse group of curators, collaborators and artists across the board to respond to 75 years of Pakistan's rich, multifaceted history post-independence. The project also questions the role of the "traditional forms of museum making" and builds on the post-pandemic reality of virtual connectivity across and despite physical borders, making cyberspace an ideal platform for local & global conversations — transcending boundaries by making accessibility of knowledge production an infinite reality.

The project aimed to achieve several outcomes, including the creation of a digital third space— a virtual platform fostering real-time interaction and accommodating diverse multimedia content centred on cultural heritage. This platform intends to enable users to actively engage by sharing experiences, posting pictures, and utilising social media. Additionally, the project plans to curate digitised talks, panel discussions, guided walks, and photo essays with audio accompaniment within the virtual museum. The initiative includes the establishment of an archive housing new cultural research funded by research grants, further



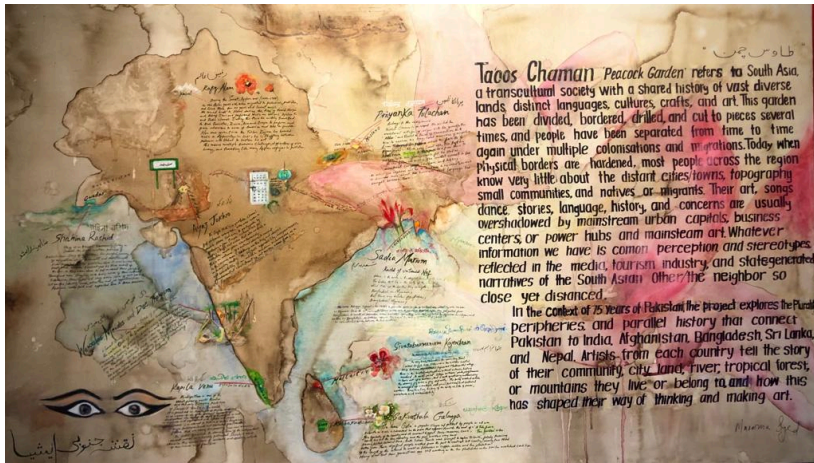
contributing to the museum's thematic focus. Furthermore, the virtual museum was envisioned as an online portal and database, digitising and showcasing local cultural projects, ultimately serving as a repository for Pakistan's cultural knowledge. Lastly, the project aimed to transform the virtual museum into a hub for global engagement, fostering collaboration among creative practitioners, academics, institutions, and other interested parties through membership and collaborative projects.

The six major components; *Architecture Through, Space & Time*, *Dastan-I-Urdu*, *Ilm-e-Mosiqi*, *Manduva*, *Ta'oos Chaman*, and *The Body & Beyond*; can be accessed [here](#).



## Exhibition

The LBF Virtual Museum exhibition came to an end on 20th September 2022 after being held at the Zahoor UI Akhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts, Lahore. Running for two weeks, it was a conversation and confluence of ideas and research, developed in partnership with the British Council Season in Pakistan and curated by Ali Usman Qasmi, Farida Batool, Masooma Syed, Sarah Zaman, Sarmad Khoosat and Tanvir Hasan, who have been instrumental throughout this project. We are grateful for their support.



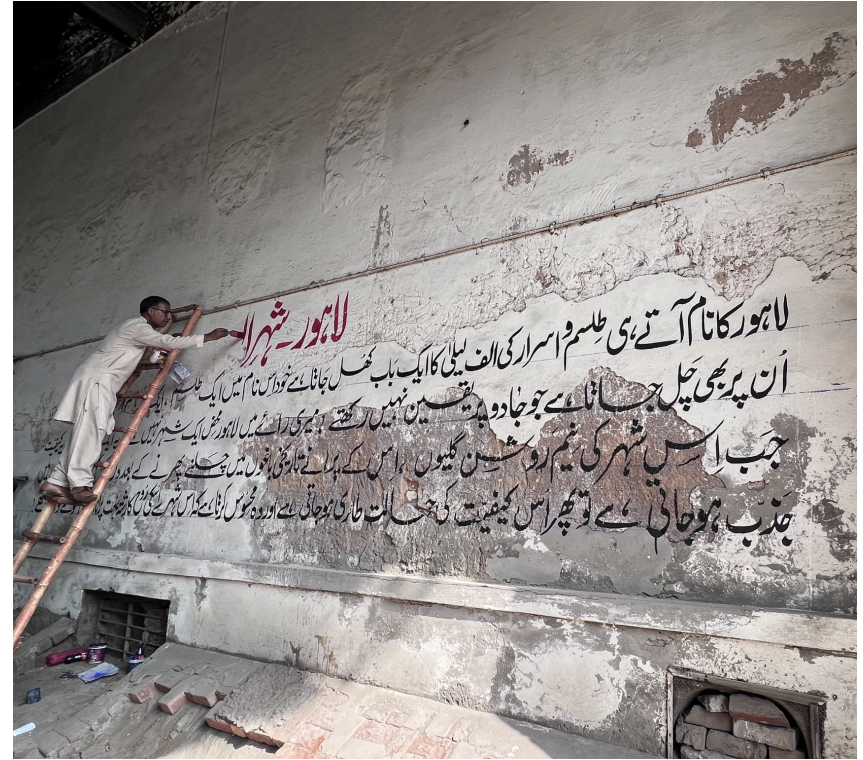
## Lahore ki aik Dastan – لاہور کی ایک داستان

March 17th - 20th, 2022

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) in collaboration with the British Council presented a four day site specific art exhibition featuring work by artist Farida Batool and curated by Tanvir Hasan. This exhibition is situated in one of the city's historic buildings—the Dyal Singh Mansions, on Mall Road — a building that has stood silently and watched the city and its people change.

Much like a *Dastaan*, the evolution of a city is fraught with many twists and turns that shape the collective experiences and memories of the people of the city held in the fabric of the built environment. By presenting the legacy of the area and the city of Lahore through the Dyal Singh mansions, the exhibition recognizes art in public spaces as a powerful medium to shape everyday experiences and engage the public in meaningful dialogues.

The exhibition features academic research elements, historic images, projection based installations and live mural painting on site that highlight local poster artists, including Agha Mukhtar, Kalid Mehmood and Afzal Khan, who have been engaged in creative practices for generations. Through art in public spaces, this initiative provides a platform for the local community, highlights cultural heritage and questions how their cultural identity has both evolved and been buried within the built environment of the city that surrounds us. The exhibition was open to the public and entry is free for all.







## Outreach

- The official website was launched, with an Urdu version to follow.
- Lahore Biennale Foundation was invited to speak at *The Word of Mouth*, a Colony Talk series (2021).
- Public Talks at PFID, LUMS and BNU about the impact of the Lahore Biennale on the contemporary art scene in Pakistan.
- Sharjah Art Foundation: LBF was invited on March 15 for the panel “*Sharjah Biennials in a Regional Context*” at the March Meeting 2021 by Sharjah Art Foundation. The sessions include the two-part panel Sharjah Biennial in a Regional Context, which focuses on the Sharjah Biennial within the context of biennials in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. In these sessions, speakers discussed old and well-established biennials but also considered the role of new ones, including biennials in Alexandria, Baghdad, Cairo, Jakarta, Karachi, Kochi, Lahore, Qalandiya/Riwaq and Yogyakarta.
- Executive Director LBF Qudsia Rahim was selected by the French Ministry of Culture to participate in the English-speaking program “Séjour culture,” which took place in May 2022, with 28 participants from 20 countries focusing on various cultural and creative industries.
- The Afforestation Lahore Group was interviewed and featured by *The Reshape* podcast - it is a mapping project by Global Shaper Hub Zurich that aims to

connect, support and fund nature restoration and conservation projects around the world.

- Stakeholder Consultation Session (Pakistan Clean Air Plan) by the Ministry of Climate on 18th March 2021
- The AGL group was interviewed and featured by SOCH media on de-greening and possible re-greening of Lahore through the Miyawaki Urban Forest initiative.
- *Our Collective History by Mall Road, Lahore* (British Council Digital Grant): The initiative is proposed to be a 2-day long event at a venue in a decaying late 19th or 20th Century - historic legacy building since destroyed. Activities include (a) a projection-based installation and (b) two talks/discussion sessions.

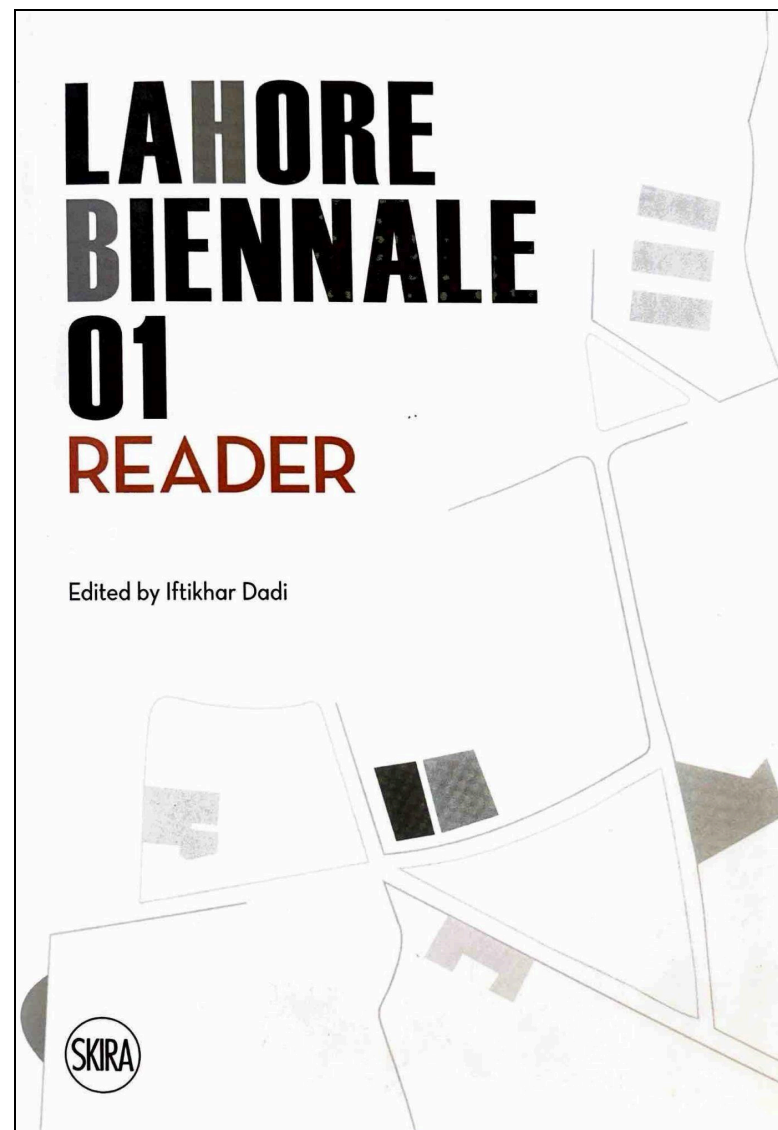


## Publications

### 1. Lahore Biennale 01 (LB01) Reader

The Lahore Biennale 01 Reader assembles substantial scholarly and curatorial essays that engage with salient questions of cultural politics in the global South. The contributions are developed from the program of the first Lahore Biennale (LB01) in 2018, which included works by over fifty artists. LB01 was accompanied with a robust academic forum that brought together local and international scholars, curators, and artists to investigate issues of relevance to contemporary art and society, regionally and globally. The biennale program included a symposium and talks by participating artists, papers by scholars and curators, panel discussions, and workshops.

Organised into thematic sections with a substantial introduction, the Lahore Biennale of Reader offers methodological and comparative insights into the contemporary art and culture of the wider region of Asia and Africa. These in turn are exemplary of the vital issues of cultural politics that the art world and the global South face today. With contributions by Attiq Ahmed, Esra Akcan, Sean Anderson, Farida Batool, Pamela N. Corey, Iftikhar Dadi, T. J. Demos, Kaitlin Emmanuel, Gridthiya Gawewong, Naiza Khan, Sonal Khullar, Mariah Lookman, Saloni Mathur, Srimoyee Mitra, Naeem Mohaiemen, Ijlal Muzaffar, Hira Nabi, Sharmini Pereira, Zarmina Rafi, Qudsia Rahim, Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Aziz Sohail, and Emilia Terracciano.

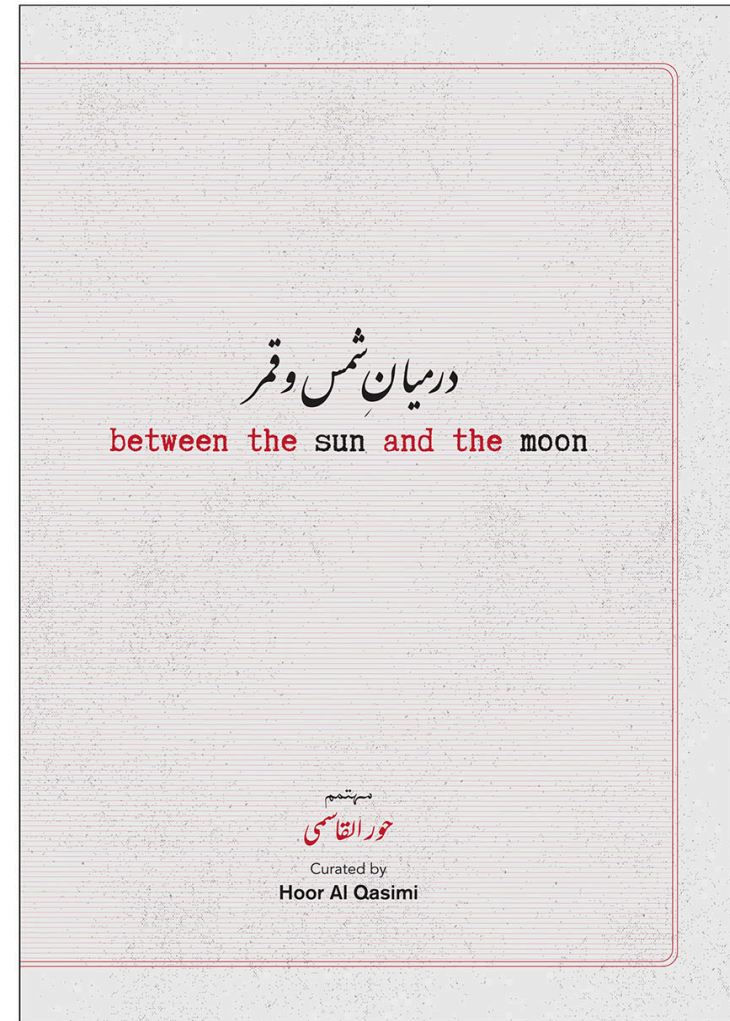


## 2. Lahore Biennale 02 (LB02) Guidebook

The 200-page Guidebook provides extensive information on the sites, artists, and themes of the Lahore Biennale 02: between the sun and the moon.

Download the Lahore Biennale 02 Guidebook as [PDF](#)

Works exploring human entanglement with nature and revisit traditional understandings of self and their cosmological underpinnings. The latter derives, in part, from astronomy, a discipline that made important strides amidst cultural and intellectual exchange between South and West Asia. For centuries, inhabitants of these regions oriented themselves with reference to the sun, the moon, and the constellations. between the sun and the moon 12, How might we reflect on our place within the cosmos today, at this juncture of the planetary climate crisis and polarities between societies? LB02 looks upwards with a view to forging new resonances and new imaginings of the future that encompass the full breadth of its material and virtual possibilities. It does from a tradition rooted in intra-regional mobility of ideas, people, and lesser-known ties such as migratory flora and fauna.



### **Lahore Biennale (LB03) (upcoming)**

Following the success of the inaugural Lahore Biennale in March 2018 and the second edition in early 2020, curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, the Foundation remains committed to showcasing groundbreaking contemporary art from around the world. LB03 promises to build on the legacy of its predecessors, with John Tain at the helm, by continuing to foster critical practice and discourse on contemporary art in the region and beyond. The Lahore Biennale has become a significant platform for contemporary art in the region, showcasing artworks from a range of disciplines and media. The appointment highlights the Foundation's commitment to promoting cultural exchange, inclusivity, and accessibility through the arts.

For the upcoming third edition, LBF will deepen its commitment to bringing art to the people through the placement of new art commissions and large-scale public installations at various heritage and everyday venues across the city. In addition, research into Lahore's history will contribute to the exhibition's emphasis on local and indigenous knowledge and practices as resources for thinking about the future. It will also showcase place-making by devoting a number of projects to Mall Road, a historical centre for public expression and cultural activity. LB03 will also integrate its discursive programming as part of its overall offering. All of these enhancements will foster a deeper connection and understanding of Lahore by diverse communities.

LB03's convening of emerging and established artists, scholars, and researchers addresses ecology and sustainable development, urgent topics in a country that in the past year has seen calamitous floods and degraded environment, aggravated by agricultural disasters, urban pollution, and social inequality. These problems now cannot be ignored, and have long been in gestation. The exhibition will foreground contributions by artists that suggest aesthetic, sensorial, conceptual, and collective ways to address such challenges, while also underscoring resonances between the histories of Lahore and Pakistan with other parts of the world that face similar issues.

LB03 is scheduled to take place October 2024



## Impact - the Lahore Biennale(s)

LBF has actively worked to democratise the art market by positioning art in public spaces, bringing appreciation to the grassroots level, and integrating it into the cityscape. This involves using historically important, underutilised, and less frequented spaces for art installations, including the Summer Palace, Bradlaugh Hall, Planetarium, Dyal Singh Mansion, Pak Tea House, Istanbul Chowk, and Lahore Museum, among others (that are currently in conservation and are getting repurposed).

Marking significant impact during the last biennale, LBF was able to invite esteemed guests like Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi of Sharjah, Sheikha Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture UAE, Sheikh Salem Al Qassimi, AUS Arts and Heritage UAE, Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate Modern, UK, writer Orhan Pamuk, and many other dignitaries.

Over five weeks, an estimated footfall of around 5 million was recorded at LB02 sites (including outdoor spaces). Curated tours for 5000 students of public schools were also organised

in collaboration with the Education Ministry, 70% of whom were female students under the age of 16. LB02 garnered attention with over 180 articles from esteemed publishers such as Harvard University Press, the Mittal Institute, The New York Times, and The Art Newspaper, among others.

We also had the honour of hosting the 7th Annual meeting of the International Biennale Association (IBA), the Global Heads' Meeting-up of Sotheby's Auction House, to develop partnerships, South Asia Institute of Harvard University; Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell University to name a few.

Even in these challenging times, the Pakistani economy observed a positive hike through an unexpected sector: Art. As per the annual report of the State Bank of Pakistan (as recently reported in Dawn, "Pakistani art export grows enormously amid Covid" July 28, 2021), the sale of art, collector's pieces, and antiques has increased by over 9000%, from \$386,000 to \$36,594,000 in the first nine months of 2021.

## Acknowledgements

### Institutional Partners

Government of Punjab  
Babar Ali Foundation  
Department of Culture & Information  
Parks & Horticulture Department  
Walled City of Lahore Authority  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nayyar Ali Dada and Associates  
Ferozsons Laboratories Limited  
Ali Embroidery Mills (Pvt) Ltd.  
Art Now

### Patrons & Advisors

Iftikhar Dadi  
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Naazish Ata-Ullah  
Syeda Nighat Ali  
Ayesha Jatoi  
Faaria Salahuddin  
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